

SAARC SUMMIT
Special security
for Indian, Pak
delegates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Special security measures will be taken for the delegates of India and Pakistan during the upcoming Saarc summit in Dhaka. State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar said yesterday after a meeting on the summit security.

The eighth meeting of the security committee also decided to take foolproof security measures across the country ahead of the 13th summit of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

The summit which was postponed twice, first for the Asian

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

64 district
bodies to
make fresh
voter list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will form 64 district-level committees that will be responsible for preparing the voter list for the next parliamentary election.

The committees will be headed by deputy commissioners (DC) and accountable to EC for coordinating the task of preparing the electoral rolls, said a senior official at the EC secretariat.

District election officers, upazila executive officers, and other high-ups at the field-level administration will be members of the committees, headed.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Fakhrudin
Biriani fined
Tk 10,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile courts against adulterated food yesterday fined reputed Fakhrudin Biriani House, closed a pharmaceuticals pharmacy, and sealed off a bakery shop during their raids in the city.

The government recently formed the mobile courts to control the adulteration of foods following a series of reports in The Daily Star.

The courts yesterday collected Tk 35,000 from two shops for having unclean kitchens and for selling expired food.

A mobile court, led by Magistrate Rokonuddullah, collected Tk 10,000 in fines from Fakhrudin Biriani House at 1/A New Bailey Road.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing

August 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-41	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

TACKLING PRICE HIKE

Govt to sell essentials
in Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to take up a unique programme of selling essential commodities at a fair price during the upcoming Ramadan and introduce a tough monitoring system to control the price spiral of essentials.

As the prices of essentials rise in every Ramadan, the government is planning to sell rice, pulses, fish, meat and vegetables on trucks at cheaper rates in the capital, officials said after a meeting on prices of essentials yesterday.

The ministries concerned have already been asked to build stock of essentials for selling in the Ramadan, the commerce secretary

told the meeting of the taskforce on prices of essentials held at the commerce ministry.

The government is also planning to sell rice and flour under Open Market Sale (OMS) programme through about 19,000 dealers across the country and start Food for Work programme from the next month, meeting sources said.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury said the government is developing a tough price monitoring system. He however declined to disclose the measures, saying, "If the trap to catch thieves is disclosed beforehand, the thieves cannot be caught."

Barkatullah Bulu, advisor to the commerce ministry, said the prices

of essentials increase due to extortion by three parties -- police, political parties and truck brokers' syndicate -- from trucks. Each trucker has to pay up to Tk 2,000 per trip, Bulu said.

A high police officer present at the meeting admitted that a section of policemen are involved in extortion. He said necessary steps will be taken to control such extortion.

The food ministry officials told the meeting that it has decided to start the Food for Work and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme next month. For this, the government is raising its food stock from 7 lakh tonnes to 14 lakh tonnes.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

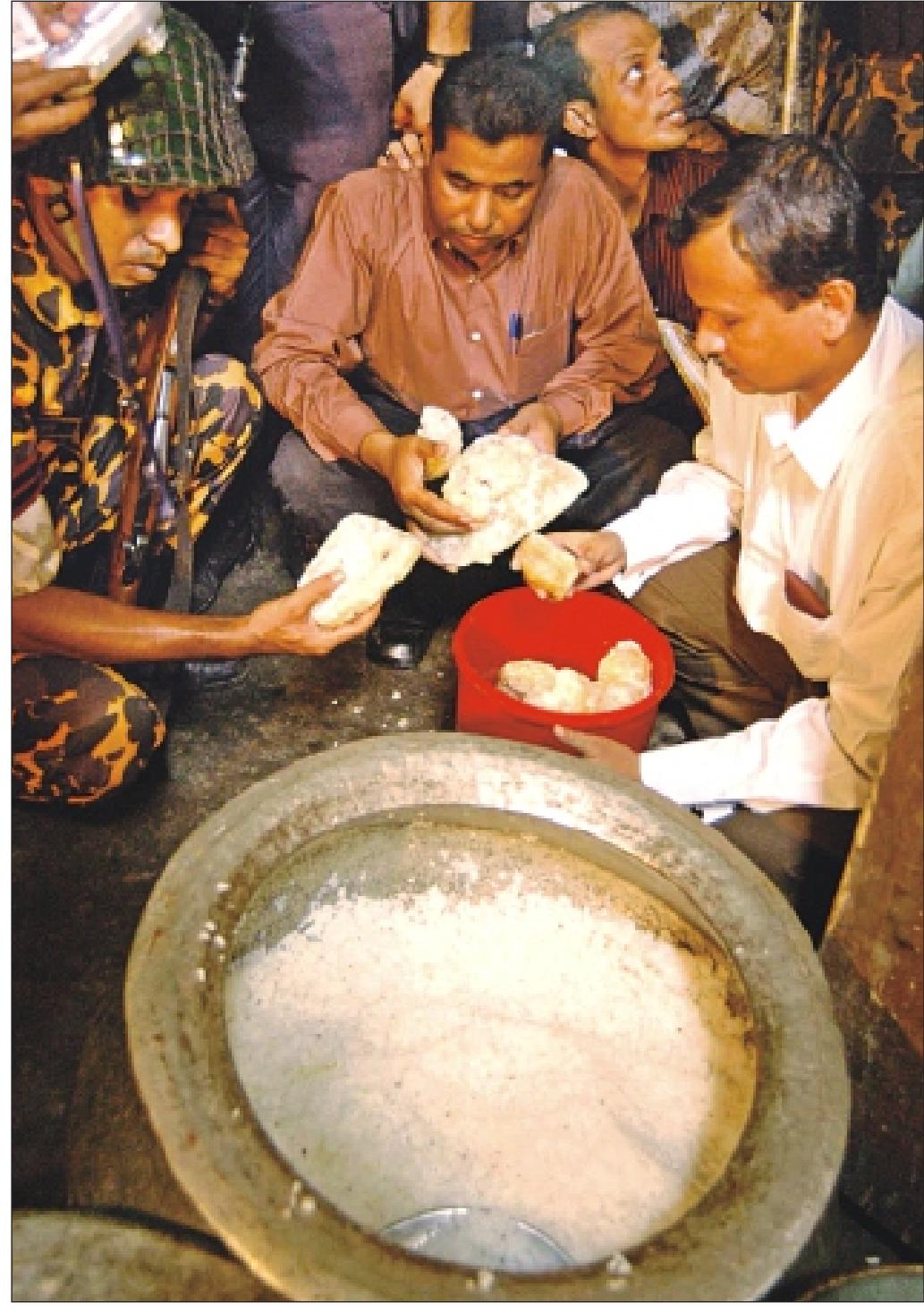


PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court inspects substandard ingredients of sweet saffron pilau at Fakhrudin Biriani House on New Bailey Road in the capital yesterday. The court fined the restaurant Tk 10,000.

Hajj flight
fare hike
decried

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two organisations of hajj agencies and pilgrims yesterday strongly demanded that the government should not increase the plane fare of the country's hajj passengers.

"The proposal of the civil aviation ministry to increase the plane fare from \$950 to \$1250 is completely illogical and contrary to the interest of the hajj passengers," Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) President Abdus Shakur said while addressing a press conference at Hotel Purbani in the city.

Fuel price-hike cannot be any logic for increasing the plane fare of the hajj pilgrims as the Biman Bangladesh Airlines already charges extra amount at present as fuel surcharge, he argued adding, "The government could rather increase the fuel surcharge from \$10 to \$20 keeping the present fare unchanged."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Britain to deport
10 more
ultra-Islamists

UK papers hail Bakri ban

AFP, London

Britain's ban on firebrand cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed returning from Lebanon has been roundly cheered by the press as 10 other foreign Islamists faced deportation in the aftermath of the London bombings.

The Home Office said Bakri's presence had been deemed "not conducive to the public good" and the Syrian-born preacher -- on holiday in Lebanon since last weekend -- was therefore being stripped of his permission to live in Britain after a 20-year stay.

British newspapers lauded the

move but wondered why it had taken so long to act.

Ten more foreign Islamists remained in detention Saturday and could follow Bakri in being booted out of Britain if the government gets its way.

Meanwhile a press report claimed the investigation into the July 7 suicide bombings that killed 52 innocent people and the failed second wave of attacks on July 21 showed the cells were not connected.

The Independent newspaper, citing a counter-terrorist source, said the probe into the four July 7

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Dhaka, S'pore
foreign office
consultation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first-ever annual foreign office consultation between Bangladesh and Singapore begins today at the city state with an aim to enhance bilateral trade, investment and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Mid-ranking AL
leaders make
self-criticism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mid-ranking leaders of Awami League (AL) yesterday observed that the main opposition's popular political programmes have failed to drum up public support in favour of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

FDI grew 50pc
last year

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Bangladesh grew 49.7 percent last year to stand at \$ 660.8 million from \$441.4 million in 2003.

According to the 4th FDI Inflow Survey report of the Board of Investment (BoI), the amount is also 10.13 percent higher than the strategic FDI target set by the BoI under its Mid-term Strategic Plan 2003-06. The target for the year 2004 was \$ 600 million.

Citing the incentives for attracting foreign investment, the BoI in its survey report says, "More investments indicate more confidence in country's business climate."

Among the three main components, re-investment accounts for the highest share (47.7 percent) of the total FDI inflow followed by equity (46.5 percent) and intra-company borrowings (5.8 percent).

The highest FDI came for telecommunications sector in 2004, followed by manufacturing, energy and power.

The telecommunications sector

got 36 percent investment while the percentage is 31 for manufacturing, 20 for energy and power and 13 for other sectors.

In a broader sectoral distribution of the FDI in 2004, service sector (66.76 per cent) emerged as the leading sector followed by manufacturing (31.30 percent).

The survey attributes substantial inflow in the telecom and energy sub-sectors as the key reason for the rise of FDI in the service sector.

Telecom represents 36 percent of the total FDI, while energy and power account for about 20 percent.

As a result of opening of the PSTN telephony to the private sector, a "sustainable robust growth" in telecom sector is envisaged in the coming years. Besides, existing cellular operators are also expected to continue their investment programme "to firm up healthier market position".

The projected growth of the industry in the coming years would require establishment of sufficient utility infrastructures like energy market position".

The Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court sent letters to the ministries on February 14 last year, seeking their approvals to resume the trial at the special court adjacent to Dhaka Central Jail. But the ministries did not yet respond.

The Dhaka metropolitan ses-

sions judge in his letters said four of the accused in the

Mohammadpur 14-murder case, who are also convicted in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, cannot be produced before his court on security grounds.

The four accused -- Lt Col Syed Farook Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahrir Rashid Khan, Lt Col Muhiuddin Ahmed and Major Bazlul Huda -- are now in the Dhaka Central Jail.

The judge sought approval from the two ministries for holding the case's trial at the special court adjacent to the Dhaka Central Jail. Trials of the Bangabandhu Murder Case and the Jail Killing Case were held at this court.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah fixed September 24 for getting approval of the ministries.

On the fateful night 30 years

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

CANNON FIRE ON AUG 15, 1975

Trial of 14 killings in
Mohammadpur stalled

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

The trial of the Mohammadpur 14-Murder Case has been stalled for years due to the reluctance of the law and the home ministries in giving necessary approvals.

These 14 people in Mohammadpur were killed in a cannon fire on the night of August 15, 1975 when founding father of the country Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated along with most of his family members in a bloody military putsch.

A cannon shell fired by military personnel taking part in the putsch on the night fell on two houses in Mohammadpur, killing 14.

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